

Lake Superior Citizens Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting
Chocolay Township Fire Hall Training Room
April 4, 2018
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Committee members and Attendees:

Attendees for the April 4, 2018 meeting are identified on Attachment #1

Agenda:

See Attachment #2.

Minutes

Meeting minutes were recorded by George Madison. These minutes LSCFAC will be posted on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website (http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79137_79763_79903_84849---,00.html).

Intro:

Chairman Mylan Koski's out-of-state work commitments prevented him from attending the meeting. Because he will be working outside of Michigan for the next few years, it was Mylan's desire to be replaced as committee chair. Fortunately, Rodney Markham and Ross Rinkinen volunteered to serve as co-chairs. A vote was taken and there was unanimous approval for this change in committee leadership.

Meeting agenda:

- Committee Business:
Minutes from last year's (April 2017) meeting were approved as written.
- Roundtable Stakeholder Summary:
 - Travis White - Copper Country Chapter Trout Unlimited (CCCTU): Travis had prepared an issue statement with thoughtful points regarding protecting and enhancing high quality lake trout fishing in Lake Superior. However, the issue statement did not get distributed prior to the meeting and time was not adequate for the committee to give it proper consideration. Because this topic of lake trout regulations is clearly important and was brought up by Travis as well as others during their roundtable discussions, the committee agreed to a proposal to hold a separate meeting in the fall (likely early December) focused solely on this issue. Details announcing this meeting will be posted when available. Travis also expressed ideas about various ways charter captains and anglers could collect data that would be useful for management and stewardship of fisheries in the lake. Besides CCCTU's ongoing involvement with the Pilgrim River Watershed Conservation Easement Project, Travis also mentioned participation on coaster brook trout projects at Michigan Technological University's Great Lakes Research Center.
 - Duncan Price - Fisher Price Charter: Duncan also stated strong opinions about lake trout regulations, particularly bag limits at Stannard Rock, Big Reef, and Isle Royale. He institutes a 3-fish bag limit on his clients when fishing Stannard Rock even though state regulations allow a 5-fish bag. Duncan believes people don't need that many big

- fish and that taking 5 can be harmful to the lake trout population and that fish may get wasted anyway. Other committee members have differing views on this topic and aspects such as hooking mortality have to be considered in the conversation, again pointing to the need for an in-depth discussion next fall.
- Dale McNamee - Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance (UPSA): Dale had a question regarding the new UP waters added to the 10-bag brook trout regulation, wondering how much checking will be done to monitor brook trout populations (the study ended in 2016, but electrofishing has continued to be done on a few streams to document abundance and size structure). There was some discussion from the group regarding how the additional 10-bag stream sections were selected and what made them appropriate or not (criteria accepted by the Natural Resources Commission were used as guidelines to make selections or recommendations).
 - Charles (Dave) Westerberg (UPSA) - progress toward reinstating comprehensive cormorant control to protect sport and commercial fisheries: Dave has been integral in implementing and coordinating efforts when control was possible. The following text came from a recent status summary: United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services and MDNR are working with US Fish and Wildlife Service to implement the Cormorant Control Program. An environmental assessment has been developed by the Wildlife Services and the US Fish and Wildlife Service pertaining to impacts of cormorants on aquaculture facilities in the southern states. Michigan is trying to obtain approval for harassment efforts that are reinforced by lethal control at fish stocking sites and at sites needing vegetation protection, or those needed for research purposes (e.g., Les Cheneaux Islands). There's also intent to reinstate annual multi-agency meetings (including Wildlife Services). Congressman Bergman has introduced a bill, H.R. 4429-The Cormorant Control Act (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4429/text>), to allow lethal control of cormorants in order to protect free swimming fish. Randy Claramunt and Dave Fielder, Fisheries Division employees, went to Washington D.C. to provide testimony regarding this bill.
 - John Highlen - Fred Waara Trout Unlimited: The chapter finished a culvert replacement project on Schwartz Creek (Escanaba River watershed), is working on projects in Iron County, hopes to expand to Alger County, and is looking for new enhancement projects to undertake.
 - Rodney Markham - Isle Royale Boaters Association (IRBA): The group (~300 members) formed in the 1990s to preserve boat dockage at Isle Royale. They successfully saved 3-4 docks from being removed and they also donated \$3,000 to the Rock of Ages lighthouse. IRBA is working with the National Park Service to see if floating docks can be installed. They would like the lake trout bag limit at Isle Royale increased from three to five (this will be part of the fall discussion – regulations at Isle Royale are complicated due to the need to work and coordinate with National Park Service as a partner). Most IRBA members visit the island to fish only once or twice per summer so they'd like to have the ability to keep more fish. Rodney believes overall fishing pressure around the island is low and most of the boats that visit are non-anglers on pleasure craft. Phil Schneeberger mentioned that the National Park Service has submitted a proposal for funding to conduct a creel program at the island in 2019. The creel survey would duplicate methodologies used in the 1998 creel survey.

- Brian Helminen - Sand Point Charters: Brian discussed a number of topics associated with his 2017 fishing season and commented that he's seen a lot of bait fish present in portions of Lake Superior. He mentioned that he, along with others, are still finding abandoned tribal nets which they report to the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC). If the nets can be marked and GPS coordinates are recorded, GLIFWC wardens will come and remove them. Also, there are ghost net marking kits that can be obtained from the Apostle Islands Sport Fisherman's Association. Continuing his comments about tribal fishing, Brian wondered about the legality of tribal boats docked at Lac LaBelle.
- Russ Weisinger - Ottawa Sportsmen's Club: This club supports splake stocking in Keweenaw Bay and would like to see the bay designated as a dedicated site for annual stocking (Keweenaw Bay currently receives splake that are excess to other stocked sites). Russ mentioned that his club members support the protective brook trout regulations (one fish of 20" or larger) on nine coastal streams and that they are seeing some 15-inch coasters being caught through the ice on Huron Bay. Russ commented that some club members believe fish populations are declining in area inland areas such as Otter Lake and Prickett Dam. He supports the 10-brook trout bag limit and would like to see it expanded to yet more waters. In his opinion, the 5-bag limit for lake trout at Stannard Rock has not impaired the fishery. Lastly, Russ mentioned that there is a lot of tribal netting in the Huron Islands and Huron Bay.
- George Lindquist - Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and Marquette County's Big Bay Sportsmen's Club (BBSC): The BBSC has worked to improve the Lake Independence fishery through sucker netting and assisting with a lake survey. George commented that he would like to see the DNR simplify sportfishing regulations. The MUCC will be putting forth a resolution in June which resolves to reduce the yellow perch daily possession limit from 50 to 25 with no more than 5 perch being of 12 inches or larger (this is the current regulation for yellow perch on Lake Gogebic). George would like to see sport fishing be allowed from docks at state marinas and he will work on developing a resolution toward this end for the 2019 MUCC convention.
- Larry Argall - Central Upper Peninsula Sport Fishing Association (CUPSFA): Larry commented that Marquette County's Teal Lake and Lake Angeline are seeing an uptick in the quality of their fisheries. Larry has a concern regarding steelhead stocking (would like to see more stocking such as at Huron Bay). He has no objections to the 10-bag brook regulation. He noted that the Shelter Bay boat launch is again in disrepair (this is a Federal, US Forest Service boat launch located in Au Train Bay – it needed repair last spring from storm damage - Michigan DNR Parks Division's Newberry Crew donated heavy equipment time to repair the launch in 2017, but a strong fall-2017 storm re-damaged the ramp - access is currently blocked by snow fencing). Last year, CUPSFA completed installation of a memorial bench on the Big Huron River in honor of former club member Ron Laitinen. The club also funded and provided assistance at youth fishing events, and it offers to assist with repairing the Shelter Bay boat launch (i.e., provide money for gravel). Larry brought up a question about creel data that showed a decline in angler hours at several ports in 2017 (angler effort did fall from exceptionally high levels recorded in 2016 – however, effort in 2017 was consistent with 10-year averages at almost every port).

- Dan Talkowski - Black River Harbor Boating Club: Dan stated that the three Lake Superior boat access sites for the western UP will be out of service this summer. The Saxon Harbor launch was destroyed in a 2016 flood and is yet to be rebuilt. The US Forest Service launch at Black River will be undergoing a reconstruction this year, and will be out of service for the entire fishing season. The Michigan DNR launch at Oman Creek (Little Girl's Point), will be under construction from April through early July to repair damage caused by Lake Superior storms. Regarding fish stocking, Dan and his fellow club members would like to see more brown trout stocking. Browns that have been caught have been big and Dan said the coho and lake trout are doing great. Dan also mentioned they have some ghost net marking kits if anybody would like to keep one in their boat.
- Floyd Dropps - Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance (UPSA): UPSA has assisted Wisconsin DNR with offshore stocking of brown trout off Menominee. The group has concerns about the current 50-fish yellow perch daily bag limit, in particular because the possession limit allows anglers to possess two additional daily bag limits or 150 yellow perch. UPSA supports reducing the yellow perch daily bag to 25 fish. Floyd also felt that there are too many small, slow-growing northern pike in inland lakes. Consequently, he'd like to see the northern pike size limit reduced and an increased bag. For lakes that can grow big pike, Floyd is fine with the current sportfishing regulation. Lastly, UPSA is always looking to see more walleye stocked in Upper Peninsula lakes.
 - Yellow Perch Daily Possession Limit: Floyd's discussion of yellow perch daily possession limits spurred group discussion on whether the limit should be 50 or 25. By a show of raised hands, one member supported keeping the daily limit at 50, a majority like the idea of reducing to a 25-perch bag, and some members who did not actively fish perch had no opinion. There was general discussion about how infrequently anyone caught 50 perch and what a chore it was to clean them on the rare occasions when they did.
- Ron Kinnunen - Michigan Sea Grant: Ron spoke about the upcoming Lake Superior workshop at Michigan Technological University's Great Lakes Research Center scheduled for April 30th (a flier was included in pre-meeting materials). He also gave an overview of ongoing coaster brook trout research, ghost nets, an upcoming Lake Superior water level workshop, cisco assessment work, and a bait industry review.
- Ed Baker - Michigan DNR Fisheries Division's Research Unit: Dr. Baker apprised the committee of Lake Superior lake trout assessment netting work which will begin at ice-out followed by work at Isle Royale to continue pop-up satellite tagging of lake trout. Later in the summer, there will be a siscowet lake trout survey in deep water areas of the central Lake Superior followed by an August lake trout survey. With regard to lake sturgeon, the three Upper Peninsula streamside rearing facilities will be operated again in 2018. Also present from the research station, Dr. Troy Zorn previewed nearshore assessment work scheduled this summer for Keweenaw Bay and Huron Bay, as well as coaster brook trout electrofishing surveys scheduled for the Iron, Wilson, Little Garlic, and Garlic rivers, all located in northern Marquette County.
- Jim Aho and Jan VanAmberg - Michigan DNR Fish Production Unit: Both Jim and Jan gave updates about the fish rearing activities at Marquette and Thompson State Fish Hatcheries. Jan mentioned the successful stocking of Mirror Lake (Porcupine

- Mountains) via snowmobile in March. All steelhead to be stocked between 2018 and 2023 will have an adipose fin clip (no coded wire tags for Lake Superior steelhead). The \$10.5 million dollar Capital Outlay State budget allotment for the Thompson State Fish Hatchery improvements is about half-way through the design phase, and will include the development of six lined outdoor rearing ponds. These ponds will be used in the early summer months for walleye rearing, and then during the latter summer months for fall fingerling muskellunge extended growth production.
- Ross Rinkinen - Copper Country Walleye Association: This club works to improve walleye fisheries of the Keweenaw Peninsula. They also host two popular summer fishing tournaments, one with the VFW and another with Lund AYA (memorial fund). They will continue to work with the Michigan DNR on walleye stocking efforts.
 - Tim Gasperich - Keweenaw Splake Anglers: This group appreciates the splake stocking that occurs in the western UP. This group is also working to improve the kids fishing pond located in Calumet, known as Swedetown Pond.
 - Jim Dexter – Fisheries Division Chief: Jim briefly brought up some over-arching areas of activity and priority such as tribal issues regarding negotiations, sturgeon spearing, lake trout issues, commercial fishers’ IDs, and the 1842 treaty area. Jim mentioned that the division’s inland trout management plan has been finalized and will be presented to the NRC. He would like to see the development of a Lake Superior Management Plan by 2019.
- Committee Requested Topics:
 - Lake trout bag limits: Stannard Rock/Big Reef;
 - Discussion on lake trout bag limits will continue in the fall of 2018.
 - Lake trout satellite tags;
 - A handout was supplied to meeting attendees that provided a general overview and graphical results of tags attached to lake trout (leans, siscowets, and redfins). The tags are programmed to pop off the fish at a predetermined date. Once the tags detach from the fish, they float to the surface and send a signal to a satellite. The tags are then recovered by the research vessel staff using radio directional equipment. Tags were deployed in 2014, 2015, and 2017. More tag retrievals are scheduled this summer.
 - Michigan DNR Law Division, Great Lakes Enforcement Unit Update:
 - Due to Law Enforcement Division scheduling conflicts, no officers were able to attend this meeting.
 - Lake Superior Roadmap:

The Lake Superior Roadmap (sent out for review prior to the meeting) is an outreach tool to guide anglers who are unfamiliar with the Lake Superior fishing opportunities by informing them what fishing ports can offer. We discussed how lake roadmaps are available for the other Great Lakes as well.
 - Fisheries Division’s 2018 – 2022 strategic plan:

Michigan DNR Fisheries Division’s 2018 – 2022 strategic plan, Charting the Course, is the Division’s second 5-year plan. Many people and organizations provided input into the

development of this document. The plan helps communicate to the public and stakeholders the programs and priorities of the division.

- Fisheries Division's mini-grant funding:

At each of the Division's all-staff conferences, a silent auction is conducted to generate donations that go to a mini-grant to aide community fishing programs. The silent auction of December 5, 2017 generated \$3,380 from DNR Fisheries staff. The committee was advised that the application deadline for projects was April 13, 2018.

- Great Lakes Fishery Commission highlights:

A brief update was given regarding the March 2018 Great Lakes Fishery Commission conference in Sault Ste. Marie. Highlights of the meetings included the Lake Superior State of the Lake report which documented that the lake is in a relatively healthy state with self-sustaining fisheries. Although preyfish (including cisco) abundances continue to be down, phytoplankton and zooplankton abundances are stable. There is concern about contaminants entering the lake (airborne), and also about the new detection of a bloody red shrimp (hemi-mysis) in the St. Louis River estuary. Another concern is that sea lamprey numbers are up.

- Buffalo Reef dredging:

This summer, using \$3-million dollars from the EPA, dredging will be contracted to benefit Buffalo Reef. The reef is an important spawning and rearing area for lake trout and lake whitefish. Dredging will occur at and around Lake Superior's Grand Travis Harbor to improve navigation, as well as in a trench that acts as a buffering sink for the reef due to its up-drift location. It is hoped this project will buy time (about 5 year) of protection for the reef, during which a long-term plan will be developed, initiated, and funded.

- Wrap-up:

There was general discussion by all.

- Next meetings:

- Fall lake trout regulations meeting (TBD)
- April 4, 2019

Attachment 1

Committee meeting attendees

LSCFAC meeting attendees April 4, 2018

Name	Organization
Jim Aho	MDNR Fish Production
Larry Argall	Central U.P. Sport Fishing Assoc.
Ed Baker	MDNR Fisheries Research
Christie Bleck	The Mining Journal
Jim Dexter	MDNR Fisheries Chief
Floyd Dropps	Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance
Tim Gasperich	Keweenaw Splake Anglers
Brian Helminen	Sand Point Charter
John Highlen	Fred Waara Chapter T.U.
Ron Kinnunen	Michigan Sea Grant
Cory Kovacs	MDNR Fisheries Management
George Lindquist	Michigan United Conservation Clubs
George Madison	MDNR Fisheries Management
Rodney Markham	Isle Royale Boaters Association
Dale McNamee	Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance
Duncan Price	Fisher Price Charter
Ross Rinkinen	Copper Country Walleye Association
Phil Schneeberger	MDNR Fisheries
Dan Talkowski	Black River Harbor Boating Club
Jan VanAmberg	MDNR Fish Production
Russell Weisinger	Ottawa Sportmen's Club
Charles Westerberg	Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance
Travis White	Copper Country Chapter T.U.
Troy Zorn	MDNR Fisheries Research

Attachment 2 Meeting agenda



Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee

A citizen-based committee charged to review and provide input and advice relative to fishery goals, objectives and management plans for Lake Superior. Members assist Fisheries Division in charting the future course of fisheries management by providing voice to and for the diversity of citizens' interests in the Lake Superior basin.

Chair (vacant)

Alger County
Fish and Game Alliance

Bay Mills Indian Community

Central Upper Peninsula
Sport Fishing Association

Copper Country Trout
Unlimited

Copper Country Walleye
Association

DNR Fisheries Division

DNR Law Enforcement
Division

Fisher Price Charters

Fred Waara Chapter Trout
Unlimited

Grand Marais Sportsman's
Club

Keweenaw Spoke Anglers

Lake Superior State
University Aquatic
Research Laboratory

Michigan Sea Grant

Michigan United
Conservation Clubs

Office of the Great Lakes

South Shore Fishing
Association

Thill's Fish House, Inc.

Upper Peninsula
Sportsmen's Alliance

Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee spring meeting,
April 4, 2018, Chocolay Firehall Training Room, 10am-3pm

Meeting agenda

- Committee business
 - Review/approval of 2017 meeting minutes
 - Committee Chair
- Advisor roundtable reports
- Committee requested topics
 - Lake Trout bag limits: Isle Royale; Stannard Rock/Big Reef
 - Lake Trout satellite tags
- Updates:
 - Law Enforcement Division
 - New officers; 2017 in review
 - Fisheries Division
 - Lake Superior Roadmap; Yellow perch bag limit; 10-Brook Trout bag limit; Chinook Salmon fishery; Division's 2018-2022 strategic plan; Cormorants; Lake Management Plans; 2018 Fishing Program Funding
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission meeting highlights
- ❖ Documents sent prior to the meeting for review
 - 2017 meeting minutes
 - 2017 Creel Survey Results
 - 2017 Commercial fisheries statistics
 - 2018 Fish stocking prescriptions
 - 2018 Lake Superior Fishery Workshop promotion sheet
 - Lake Superior Roadmap
 - Lake Trout satellite tag project
 - 10 Brook Trout bag streams